

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 L-02 H-01 SWF-01 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 INR-05 NSAE-00

RSC-01 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /076 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6644

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: WILSON REPORTS TO COMMONS ON EC SUMMIT

REF: LONDON 16057

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER WILSON'S PARLIAMENTARY REPORT ON

EC PARIS SUMMIT WAS CLOSER TO LOW COMEDY THAN TO THE

HIGH DRAMA WHICH MEDIA HAD ANTICIPATED. HOWEVER,IN

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REPLYING TO QUESTION FROM BACKBENCH TRIBUNITE, WILSON

STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD NOT CONSIDER SPECIAL
LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE DECISION ON EC ISSUE AS BINDING
ON GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. PRIME MINISTER WILSON DECEMBER 16 DELIVERED HIS
REPORT TO COMMONS ON RESULTS OF EC SUMMIT MEETING (ILL-
NESS PREVENTED HIM FROM MAKING STATEMENT LAST WEEK, AS
WAS ORIGINALLY PLANNED). IN HIS INITIAL STATEMENT
WILSON STRESSED HIS DEFENSE OF BRITISH INTERESTS, ACKNOW-
LEDGED THAT RESULTS OF MEETING WERE PROMISING, IF MODEST,
AND NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF UK INTERESTS STILL HAD TO BE
ACCOMMODATED IN RENEGOTIATION PROCESS. PRINCIPAL ACHIE-
VEMENT AT SUMMIT, ACCORDING TO WILSON, WAS AGREEMENT ON
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND, BUT HE ALSO CITED REINTERPRE-
TATION OF 1966 LUXEMBOURG AGREEMENT AS USEFUL STEP.
PERHAPS HIS MOST NOTABLE REMARK, HOWEVER, CAME IN REPLY
TO QUESTION FROM LEFT-WING TRIBUNITE NORMAN ATKINSON WHO
ASKED IF WILSON WOULD ADVISE BRITISH PEOPLE TO ACCEPT RE-
NEGOTIATIONS IN ADVANCE OF ANY DECISION BY THE LABOR
PARTY CONFERENCE. IN RESPONSE WILSON SAID HIS EARLIER
STATEMENT (REFTEL) HAD BEEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARTY
MANIFESTO AND: "I STAND BY THE MANIFESTO. I STAND BY
THE REQUIREMENTS WE HAVE SET OUT AND IF WE CAN GET THEM
IT STANDS TO REASON THAT I CAN COMMEND THEM TO THE
COUNTRY."

2. MOST NOTABLE ASPECT OF DEBATE, HOWEVER, WAS ITS
GENERAL LEVITY. WILSON AND OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN EDWARD
HEATH AND JEREMY THORPE, BOTH OF WHOM CONGRATULATED PRIME
MINISTER FOR HIS EVIDENT COMMITMENT TO EC, TRADED GOOD-
NATURED JIBES TO DELIGHT OF BACKBENCHES ON BOTH SIDES OF
AISLE. WILSON'S RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION'S BARBED PRAISE
WAS WITTY AND CUTTING, AND HE CLEARLY HAD THE EDGE OVER
HIS ADVERSARIES. OPPOSITION WAS ALSO GREATLY AMUSED BY
HOSTILE QUESTIONS LABOR PARTY ANTI-MARKETEERS AIMED AT
THEIR LEADER AND HIS SKILLFUL HANDLING OF BACKBENCH DIS-
SATISFACTION IN HIS OWN PARTY.

3. COMMENT: MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS
IN OUR VIEW, WAS IMPLICATION THAT WILSON DOES NOT INTEND
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TO BE BOUND BY DECISIONS TAKEN AT SPECIAL LABOR PARTY
CONFERENCE WHICH IS SCHEDULED TO PRECEDE REFERENDUM.
WHILE HE WILL NO DOUBT KEEP HIS OPTIONS OPEN IN THIS
REGARD, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT ABOUT HIS PRESENT INTENT.
TAKEN AS A WHOLE, WILSON'S PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT WILL
FURTHER LIFT THE HOPES OF THE LABOR PARTY'S BOUYANT PRO-
MARKET GROUP. THE ANTI-MARKETEERS, HOWEVER, HAVE BY NO
MEANS GIVEN UP AND ARE IN FACT MEETING TONIGHT (DECEMBER

17) TO MAP THEIR STRATEGY.

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